(c) whether Government would assist them in exporting the huge stock of chillies lying for exports by opening a regional office of Spices Board in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Spices Board jointly with the Horticulture Deptt. of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh and Regional Agriculture Research Institute (RARS), "LAM, Guntur" proposes to conduct training programmes in the districts of Guntur, Khammam, Prakasam, Warrangal and karimnagar for creation of awareness amongst the chilly growers on quality management and post-harvest handling of chillies with emphasis on need based application of pesticides.

(c) Yes Sir. The Spices Board proposes to open an office in Guntur for assisting the growers specially in the areas of quality management and post-harvest handling of storage of chillies for exports.

Tobacco exports to Russia and CIS Countries

912. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase tobacco exports to Russia and CIS countries in 1996-97;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary negotiations have been completed; and

(c) the steps proposed to improve tobacco exports to Russia and CIS countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) Under a bilateral perspective plan agreement, the Russian Government allocates rupee repayment funds to facilitate import of Tobacco upto 20,000 metric tonnes from India each year. The perspective Plan is at present operational for the period 1995-97.

Some of the steps taken/being taken for increasing tobacco exports to Russia and CIS States are:—

(i) Exploring possibilities of entering into long-term supply contracts with the tobacco processing plants in Russia.

(ii) persuading Russian authorities through bilateral discussions to fully utilise the funds allocated under the rupee repayment funds for the purchase of tobacco from India.

(iii) Facilitating contacts between importers from Russia and other CIS countries with Indian tobacco manufacturers and exporters through visits of trade delegations.

(iv) Permitting stock and sales of tobacco in CIS countries and exports on consignment basis against payment in freely convertible currencies.

(v) Encouraging the Indian exporters to set up offices in CIS countries.

Foreign exchange earned from export of tobacco products

913. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign exchange earned from the export of different tobacco products in 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) the break-up of export of tobacco products, giving details;

(c) whether any item is showing an upward trend in exports in 1996-97; and

(d) details of such tobacco products which show upward trends in exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The quantity of tobacco products exported and foreign exchange earned during 1995-96 and 1996-97 (April-Dec.) vis-a-vis 1995-96 (April-Dec.) are as follows:—